

# The History of the Globe

What is a globe? A globe in contrast to paper maps resembles the shape of the earth: it is formed like a ball.

The oldest still existing globe resembling the earth is on display at the "*Germanisches Nationalmuseum*" in Nuremberg. It was created by Martin Behaim between 1491 and 1493, also in Nuremberg. He was a cartographer and lived and worked at the Portuguese court. Due to the imperial ambitions of the Portuguese to strengthen their power overseas, Behaim had the best conditions to research and experience the world's exploration. Besides his scientific interests, he was also an adventurer: He traveled along the west coast of Africa, which was quite dangerous during that time. Since the globe was created before Christopher Columbus discovered the American continent, the globe does not depict the

Americas. But the west coast of Africa is shown in a very detailed way, because Behaim had been there himself. Behaim developed the globe to show the recent discoveries which the Portuguese and other nations had made.

There are actually a lot of mistakes on this globe, because people during that time did not have the technical means to map out the whole of the world. But Behaim's globe gave way to a totally new approach of cartography and this can be seen as a quite modern idea for his time.

Today, the globe shows us what image the scholars had of the earth at that time. It is a unique artifact of the geographical achievements that were being made during the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Source: <http://www.martin-behaim-gymnasium.de/BigrBehaim/behaimbio.htm>  
<http://www.loc.gov/rr/geogmap/guide/gmillgtm.html>  
[http://www.onb.ac.at/sammlungen/globen/history/glo\\_history.htm](http://www.onb.ac.at/sammlungen/globen/history/glo_history.htm)